

With great respect for President Obama and with great anticipation of the new direction the President will lead America in all foreign policy aspects – pursuing diplomacy and development first and foremost – I respectfully voted no on H.R. 2346, the Supplemental Appropriations Act of 2009 yesterday.

In the past few months, I've met personally with Afghan and Pakistani diplomats and security experts to discuss a variety of security issues related to Afghanistan and Pakistan. And as I reported to President Obama in early May, I think that the following elements should be a part of our strategy going forward, including: 1) building the countries' infrastructure, industry, markets and workforce; 2) involving local leaders at all levels of decision-making; 3) supporting the countries' most effective indigenous reconstruction, stabilization and conflict resolution strategies; 4) educating girls and integrating women into political and economic leadership; and 5) ensuring oversight so that foreign resources support the goals mentioned above.

As I mentioned when the supplemental was first considered on the House floor, I recognize that our new administration believes that the supplemental is a necessary carryover from the previous administration, but I cannot support the continuation of the Bush Administration's failed modus operandi in Afghanistan, Pakistan, and Iraq, and the mis-proportioned 90-10 doctrine of assistance allocation – that is, 90% for military investments and only 10% for political, economic, and social development. The Supplemental represented our first opportunity to correct the failed approaches of the past, but we unfortunately did not use this chance.

Going forward, I hope that I can work closely with the President to ensure a policy more aligned with the 80-20 model often quoted by General David Petraeus, which would invest 80% of resources into political capacity and institutions with only 20% for military. In this regard, I have presented specific recommendations to my colleagues in Congress, with the intention of informing and improving U.S. policy in Afghanistan and Pakistan. I was pleased to hear in my April meeting with the President that his FY2010 budget request will move in this direction.